

Outcome Statement

9th Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030

Educating for an Inclusive and sustainable future

We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-governmental and civil society organizations and members of the Collective Consultation of NGOs (CCNGO) for Education 2030 gathered in Hammamet, Tunisia, on 3 and 4 December 2019, on the theme “Educating for an inclusive and sustainable future.”

Recalling the 8th CCNGO Declaration¹, we reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 4, and its recognition of education as a fundamental human right, public good and state responsibility.

We recognize the need and urgency to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all from early childhood care and education through compulsory schooling, youth and adult learning and education, including tertiary education and lifelong learning.

We share the definition of inclusion as a transformative process that ensures access to and participation in quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, respecting and valuing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education. We note that adult learning and education (ALE) is the least supported dimension of lifelong learning.

We note with concern that the **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** in July 2019 highlighted that the world is not on track to meet its commitments on SDG4 –Education 2030 and in particular to deliver on its promise of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

On current trends, 220 million children and youth will still be excluded from school in 2030 and one in three young people will not complete secondary education.² Despite progress, many countries are failing to eliminate enduring multiple forms of discrimination in and through education and are still far from achieving gender equality at all levels of education.³ According to the most recent data from UIS, there are 192 million girls who do not have the chance to get an education. Furthermore, on average one in three children with disabilities of primary school age is out of school.

¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248929>

² Some other gaps: 750 million youth and adults who cannot read and write; 262 million children, and youth who do not attend school; 617 million or 58% of children and adolescents are not able to read and do basic mathematics, many of whom are in school; Half of pre-school age children are not enrolled in early childhood education; only half of all adolescents and youth complete secondary school, with only 18% in low-income countries – and 1% of poorest girls .

³ GEMR and UIS

Clearly, we have an education crisis, fueled by lack of political will, low prioritization of education and inadequate financing as well as a rising trend in education commercialization, contributing to increasing inequality. To different degrees, education systems worldwide are not responding to the 2030 Agenda's commitment to "leave no one behind" and are failing to address multiple exclusions related to social and economic disadvantage, gender, disability, LGBTQI, race and ethnicity, migration, refugee status, displacement and remote and rural location.

We note that we live in an interconnected and interdependent world bringing with it enduring and new environmental, economic, social, cultural and political challenges. Additionally, there are challenges related to artificial intelligence and rapid technological innovations, leading to uncertainty regarding work, as well as a demand for new skills and knowledge for sustainable livelihoods. The current context is marked by increased migration and massive displacement, rising extremism, threats to democracy and freedom of expression, shrinking spaces for civil society participation and action and increasing threats brought about by climate change.

Moreover, we meet in the Arab region, the most affected by population movements due to conflict and crisis, with a high percentage of school-age refugees missing out on their right to education.

In line with the Political Declaration of the 2019 United Nations General Assembly SDG Summit, we call for a bolder policy focus on inclusion as an imperative to ensure the realization of a world where "all children, youth and adults are empowered with the relevant knowledge and skills to shape more resilient inclusive and sustainable societies".

We call on governments to embrace the full SDG4 agenda and to counter initiatives that aim to limit it⁴. We also call on governments to give systematic priority to ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable and marginalized groups have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, in settings that are accessible, safe and free from discrimination, stigmatization and all forms of violence, in particular related to early marriage and teenage pregnancy as well as gender and school-based violence and actions against children and teachers in crisis affected regions.

We express our deep concern about the growth in education privatization and commercialization, the persistent violation of the right to 12 years of free education and the push for debt as a means for overcoming the current financing gap. We urge that public education systems be strengthened to uphold the right to education and donor support must be channeled to this end. Furthermore, all private provision must be well regulated and be aligned with human rights principles⁵.

Drawing on the Cali Commitment⁶, we agreed on key conditions and actions to strengthen inclusion at all levels of education, and furthermore call on governments to:

⁴ Recent examples that undermine the full SDG4 Agenda are the launch of the World Bank's Global Learning Target, based on their newly coined concept of "Learning Poverty" and the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) current strategy which predominantly focuses on children's learning outcome and equity.

⁵ These are outlined in numerous human rights instruments as well as the Abidjan Principles
<https://www.abidjanprinciples.org/>

⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910>

- Ensure legal, policy and planning frameworks that adopt an inclusive rights-based approach
- Develop curricula and pedagogical practices that respect intercultural and linguistic diversity, promote human rights, global citizenship and gender equality
- Ensure that teaching is a valued profession with decent working conditions⁷. Teachers must be adequately trained, recognized, remunerated and supported to promote a culture and a practice of inclusion, ensuring, among other things, the fulfillment of the right to education for children with disabilities. It is important they reach out to the broader community. Teachers' autonomy regarding curricula and developing critical thinking must be ensured.
- Improve the collection and availability of disaggregated and reliable data to inform action, monitoring and the assurance of accountability. Credible data from multiple actors including government, multilateral organizations, development partners, academia and civil society should be taken into account.
- Build safe, inclusive learning environments free of harassment, violence and discrimination, and support mechanisms that offer access to services and information for those affected, including refugees and displaced people.
- Recognize democratic student governments as politically legitimate institutions within education systems and support the inclusion of student representation within education decision-making structures.
- Engage in wider inter-ministerial and parliamentary dialogue and policy making in order to address the full SDG4 agenda and linkages with other SDGs.

We urgently reaffirm that acknowledging education as a fundamental human right implies and requires increased financing. Accordingly, we call on governments to meet the agreed education financing benchmarks for education— namely at least 4 to 6% of GDP and 15% to 20% of public expenditure towards education, including through national and global tax justice mechanisms. To bridge the financing gap, donors must fulfill the commitment of 0.7% of gross national product to aid, allocate at least 10% of that to education. Education's share in humanitarian aid must be increased.

Acknowledging the state as the duty bearer, we call for strengthening the critical role of civil society in ensuring the right to education for all. This implies setting in place institutionalized mechanisms for meaningful civil society participation at national, regional and international levels, including in the global education architecture, leveraging collective dialogue and action. We furthermore call for protecting and advancing the right to full participation of associations of students, youth, teachers and parents, communities and civil society organizations in education policy making and monitoring, with particular attention to involving marginalized groups.

As we enter the last decade of SDG realization, we reaffirm our commitment to the right to education through collective action across all continents. We furthermore commit to strengthen partnership between education stakeholders, other social sectors, the media and the broader community to promote inclusion and equity. We commit to building civil society capacities, including to engage other stakeholders more effectively and to collect and analyze evidence-based data on the most marginalized groups. We acknowledge UNESCO's leadership in coordinating the SDG4 agenda and the Education 2030 architecture. We reaffirm that CCNGO is a

⁷ As spelt out in SDG8 and ILO Conventions

key mechanism for increased information-sharing, capacity building and collaboration amongst CSOs in the pursuit of SDG4.

We call on UNESCO to ensure that CCNGO is strengthened, including through core funding, to enable it to play a central role in UNESCO's leadership and coordination of SDG4. This must include continuing to recognize civil society as a fully-fledged partner in debates and decisions in the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030.

The 9th CCNGO meeting expresses its deep solidarity and profound concern with the human rights violations of the people living in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially children and teachers, and call for urgent measures in accordance with international human rights laws, in particular to ensure their right to education.

We thank UNESCO, the GCE, ACEA and ANDET for organizing this 9th CCNGO Meeting on Education 2030 in Hammamet, Tunisia.